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BASIC RECIPES FOR COOKING FISH

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Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	1
Fried Fish.....	2
Broiled Fish.....	2
Baked Fish.....	3
Baked Stuffed fish.....	3
Bread Stuffing.....	3
Baked Fillets or Steaks.....	4
Baked Stuffed Fillets.....	4
Oven Fried Fillets.....	4
Planked Fish.....	5
Boiled Fish.....	5
Liquids used for Boiling Fish.....	5
Acid Water.....	5
Fish Stock.....	5
Court Bouillon.....	5
Steamed Fillets.....	6
New England Fish Chowder.....	6
Fish Salad.....	6

INTRODUCTION

Very few people realize how many varieties of fish are available on the market. Only about seven species of fish are well known to the average consumer from coast to coast although there are actually about 160 varieties sold in the United States. Your dealer will be glad to give helpful information on the species that are currently available and will fillet or dress them as desired.

Of course, there are differences in flavor, texture, appearance, relative number of bones and size. However, the fundamental rules for cooking practically all fish are few, and easy to follow. For this reason the use of basic recipes such as frying, broiling, baking, planking, boiling, and steaming are stressed in this publication.

The only real differentiation in types of fish, as related to fish cookery, is variation in fat content. As a rule, fat fish, such as salmon or shad, are preferred for baking, broiling, and planking because their fat content will keep them from becoming dry. Lean fish, such as cod and haddock, are preferred by some for boiling and steaming as their flesh is firm, and will not fall apart so easily while cooking. Both fat and lean fish are suitable for frying.

INTRODUCTION (Cont'd.)

There are, however, so many exceptions to these rules that actually all fish may be cooked by any of the basic methods with excellent results if allowances are made for the fat content. For example, lean fish, such as halibut, when broiled or baked will have a tendency to become dry unless basted frequently with melted fat.

The most important thing to remember in cooking fish is that it is too often overcooked. Just enough cooking to enable the flesh to be flaked easily from the bones will leave the fish moist and tender and bring out its delicate flavor.

FRIED FISH

- 2 pounds fillets or steaks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon milk or water
- 1 cup bread crumbs

Cut fish into serving size portions. Sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Beat egg slightly, and blend in the milk. Dip fish in the egg and roll in crumbs. Fry according to one of the following methods:

Pan Frying: Place fish in a heavy frying pan which contains about 1/8 inch melted fat, hot but not smoking. Fry at a moderate heat. When fish is brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time about 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the fish. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve immediately on a hot platter, plain or with a sauce.

Deep Fat Frying: Use a deep kettle with a frying basket and enough fat to cover the fish, but do not have the kettle more than half full of fat. Heat the fat to 375° F. Place a layer of fish in the frying basket and cook to an even golden brown, about 3 to 5 minutes. Raise basket, remove fish and drain on absorbent paper. Serve immediately on a hot platter, plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

BROILED FISH

- 2 pounds fillets or steaks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted

Cut fish into serving size portions. Sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Place fish on a preheated greased broiler pan about 2 inches from the heat, skin side up, if skin has not been removed from the fillets. Brush fish with melted fat. Broil for 5 to 8 minutes or until slightly brown, baste with melted fat and turn carefully. Brush other side with melted fat and cook 5 to 8 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove carefully to a hot platter, garnish, and serve immediately plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

BAKED FISH

- 3 or 4 pound fish, dressed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 3 slices bacon*

Clean, wash and dry fish. Rub inside and out with salt. Place fish in a greased baking pan. Brush with melted fat and lay slices of bacon over the top. Bake in a moderate oven 350° F. for 40 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. If fish seems dry while baking, baste occasionally with drippings or melted fat. Serve immediately on a hot platter, plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

*Optional

BAKED STUFFED FISH

- 3 or 4 pound fish, dressed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- bread stuffing
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat melted
- 3 slices of bacon*

Clean, wash and dry the fish. Sprinkle inside and out with salt. Stuff fish loosely, and sew the opening with needle and string, or close with skewers. Place fish in a greased baking pan. Brush with melted fat. Bake in a moderate oven 350° F. for 40 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily from the bone when tested with a fork. If fish seems dry while baking, baste occasionally with drippings or melted fat. Remove the string or skewers and serve immediately on a hot platter plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

*Optional

BREAD STUFFING

- 3 tablespoons onions, chopped
- 3/4 cup celery, chopped
- 6 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon thyme, sage or savory seasoning
- 4 cups day old bread crumbs

Cook the celery and onions in the melted fat for about 10 minutes or until tender. Add the cooked vegetables and seasonings to the bread crumbs, and mix thoroughly. If dressing seems very dry, add 2 tablespoons water, milk or fish stock to moisten.

BAKED FILLETS OR STEAKS

- 2 pounds fish fillets or steaks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon onion, grated
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- paprika

Cut fish into serving size portions. Sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Add the lemon juice and onion to the melted fat. Dip each piece of fish into this mixture and place in a greased baking pan. Pour the rest of the fat over the fish. Bake in a moderate oven 350° F. for 25 to 30 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Sprinkle with paprika. Serve immediately on a hot platter. Serves 6.

BAKED STUFFED FILLETS

- 2 fillets, about 1 pound each
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- Bread Stuffing (1/2 recipe)
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 3 slices bacon*

Remove the skins from the fillets, if skins have not been removed. Sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Place one fillet in a well greased baking pan. Place stuffing on the fillet and cover with the remaining fillet. Fasten together with toothpicks or skewers. Brush top with melted fat and lay slices of bacon on top. Bake in a moderate oven 350° F. for 30 to 40 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove carefully to a hot platter and take out fasteners, garnish and serve hot with a sauce. Serves 6.

*Optional

OVEN FRIED FILLETS

- 2 pounds fillets
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 4 tablespoons butter or other fat melted

Cut fillets into serving size portions. Add the salt to the milk and mix. Dip the fish in the milk and roll in crumbs; place in well greased baking pan. Pour melted fat over fish. Place pan on shelf near the top of a very hot oven 500° F. and bake 10 to 12 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serve immediately on a hot platter, plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

PLANKED FISH

3 or 4 pound fish, dressed
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
4 tablespoons butter or other fat
seasoned mashed potatoes
seasoned cooked vegetables (peas, carrots,
cauliflower,
tomatoes or onions)

If hardwood plank is used, oil well and place in a cold oven and heat thoroughly as oven preheats.

Clean, wash and dry fish. Sprinkle inside and out with salt and pepper. Brush with melted fat. Place fish on the hot oiled plank or on a greased oven glass or metal platter. Bake in a moderate oven 400° F. for 35 to 45 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove from oven and quickly arrange a border of hot mashed potatoes around fish. Place in a preheated broiler until potatoes are slightly browned, about 5 minutes. Remove and arrange two or more hot vegetables around fish. Garnish with parsley and lemon or tomato wedges. Serve immediately on the plank. Serves 6.

BOILED FISH

2 pounds fillets
2 quarts water
3 tablespoons salt

Cut fillets into serving size portions. Place fish in a wire basket or on a plate. The plate if used should be tied in a piece of cheese-cloth. Lower the fish into the salted, boiling water and simmer, (never boil), about 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove fish carefully to a hot platter. Garnish and serve hot with a rich, bright colored sauce. Serves 6.

LIQUIDS USED FOR BOILING FISH

Boiled fish may be improved in flavor by cooking in one of the following liquids:

Acid Water: To each quart of water add 1 1/2 tablespoons of salt and 3 tablespoons of lemon juice or vinegar.

Fish Stock: To each quart of cold water add 1 pound of fish trimmings (head, bones, skin and tails) and 1 1/2 tablespoons of salt, bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain.

Court Bouillon:

1/3 cup carrots, chopped
1/3 cup onion, chopped
1/3 cup celery, chopped

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Court Bouillon: (Continued)

- 2 sprigs parsley
- 2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 2 quarts water
- 6 whole black peppers
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 tablespoons vinegar

Cook the vegetables in fat about 5 minutes to brown slightly. Add water, spices (tied in a bag) and vinegar, simmer 30 minutes. Strain.

STEAMED FILLETS

- 2 pounds fillets
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt

Salt fish on both sides. Place fish in a well greased steamer pan, and cook over boiling water for 10 to 12 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove fish carefully to a hot platter, and serve hot with a rich bright colored sauce. Serves 6.

NEW ENGLAND FISH CHOWDER

- 2 pounds fillets
- 4 tablespoons bacon, diced
- 3/4 cup onions, diced
- 2 cups hot water
- 2 cups potatoes, diced
- 4 cups rich milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Cut fillets in about 1 inch cubes. Fry bacon until crisp and browned. Add onions and brown slightly. Add water and potatoes and cook 10 minutes or until potatoes are partially tender. Add fish and cook until it can be flaked easily when tested with a fork. Add milk, seasonings and heat. Serve immediately with chopped parsley sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.

FISH SALAD

- 2 cups flaked fish
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1/2 cup celery, diced
- 1/2 cup peas
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle, chopped
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- 3 hard cooked eggs, diced
- lettuce

Combine first 7 ingredients, being careful not to break the fish into too small pieces. Serve on lettuce cups, and garnish with sliced eggs. Serves 6.